

Published and Copyright (c) 1999 - 2016
All Rights Reserved

Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
Dana P. Jacobson, Publisher/Managing Editor
Joseph Mirando, Managing Editor
Rob Mahlert, Associate Editor

Atari Online News, Etc. Staff

Dana P. Jacobson -- Editor
Joe Mirando -- "People Are Talking"
Michael Burkley -- "Unabashed Atariophile"
Albert Dayes -- "CC: Classic Chips"
Rob Mahlert -- Web site
Thomas J. Andrews -- "Keeper of the Flame"

With Contributions by:

Fred Horvat

To subscribe to A-ONE, change e-mail addresses, or unsubscribe,
log on to our website at: www.atarinews.org
and click on "Subscriptions".
OR subscribe to A-ONE by sending a message to: dpj@atarinews.org
and your address will be added to the distribution list.
To unsubscribe from A-ONE, send the following: Unsubscribe A-ONE
Please make sure that you include the same address that you used to
subscribe from.

To download A-ONE, set your browser bookmarks to one of the
following sites:

<http://people.delphiforums.com/dpj/a-one.htm>
Now available:
<http://www.atarinews.org>

Visit the Atari Advantage Forum on Delphi!
<http://forums.delphiforums.com/atari/>

=~::~~::~=

~ Edge Tracks Your Sites ~ Facebook's "Reactions" ~

```

    * World's Oldest Torrent Active *-
    * Firefox Will Now Push E-mail, More! *-
    * France Wants New Keyboard, Protect Language *-

```

$$= \sim = \sim = \sim =$$

```
->From the Editor's Keyboard           "Saying it like it is!"
   " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " "
```

As I mentioned/hoped last week, the storm that hit the mid-Atlantic last week missed us here in Northeast Massachusetts! We barely got a dusting here, much to the joy of many. I'm definitely not sorry that we probably will not experience a winter like we had last year! In fact, over the next week or so, we should be expecting some warmer-than-usual temperatures - welcome February and 50+ degrees!

I have little to say this week - it's been a long and tiring one. So, let's just move ahead and get right to this week's issue!

Until next time...

$$= \sim = \sim = \sim =$$

```
->In This Week's Gaming Section - Bungie President Steps Down, New CEO Announced!
    " """""""""""""""""""""""""""""""" Song of the Deep Is Gorgeous Underwater Me
troid'
```

$$= \sim = \sim = \sim =$$

->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
 ~~~~~

## Bungie President Steps Down, New CEO Announced

Harold Ryan has stepped down as Bungie's president.

As yet a replacement president has not been announced, although former COO Pete Parsons will be taking up a new position as CEO.

Though there s no explanations as to why Ryan has stepped down, nor information on if he will remain at the studio, Parsons did release a short statement on the official website:

"I want to personally thank Harold for his friendship, passion, hard work, and dedication in helping make Bungie the great company it is today. As a team, we celebrated many victories and weathered many storms."

"To the players of Destiny, I want you to know that my number one priority, and Bungie's, is and always has been to deliver great games that we can all share together. I believe that Destiny is a one-of-a-kind experience. I also believe you have yet to see our studio's best work. My new role here at the studio will be entirely focused on fulfilling that promise."

Could the move be a consequence of recent difficulties at the studio? Reports of an increasingly salty fanbase, coupled with rumours that Destiny 2 s release has now slipped from its September 2016 window, intimate that despite the well-received The Taken King expansion, things may not be easy right now for Bungie employees.

## Song of the Deep Is a Gorgeous Underwater Metroid

What happens when a big game studio goes small? We ll find out later this year with Song of the Deep, a newly announced game from Insomniac Games, purveyors of huge franchises like Ratchet & Clank and the Resistance shooters.

Song of the Deep is significantly smaller in scope than those massive, 3D series. It puts you in the shoes and submarine of Merryn, a plucky tween whose beloved fisherman father fails to come home from work one night. Merryn does what any loving daughter would do in these circumstances: She cobbles together a homemade submersible and ventures forth into the deep to seek her departed dad.

Merryn s quest will take her through gorgeous coral reefs, underwater caves, a vast Atlantis-like sunken empire, and other lovingly rendered locations. Technically speaking, it s a Metroidvania (a portmanteau of Metroid and Castlevania, classic NES games that defined the genre) a 2D scrolling action-adventure that emphasizes exploration.

We got some hands-on time with Song of the Deep. Equal parts puzzle solving, raw exploration, and undersea combat, it s easy to like. The art direction creates a compelling atmosphere with old-school parallax scrolling, subtle lighting effects, and handcrafted, watercolor-esque backdrops. As any game in this genre should do, it urges you forward with promises of new zones to unlock and hidden nooks and crannies to uncover.

Song of the Deep also marks a new direction for brick-and-mortar game retailer GameStop, which has signed on as a publisher. The deal will give Song of the Deep an opportunity to get some

valuable shelf space in the real world, in addition to being for sale via download services like Steam and PSN. Also in the pipeline are merchandising tie-ins, including a storybook that will further elaborate on the adventures of Merryn and her sub. (A GameStop spokesperson insisted it's a very hands-off partner, leaving all creative matters to Insomniac alone.)

Song of the Deep will launch in the second quarter of 2016 for PlayStation 4, Xbox One, and PC.

=~==~==

A-ONE's Headline News  
The Latest in Computer Technology News  
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

#### Web Link Causes Safari Crashes, Device Reboots on iOS and Mac

A website in circulation as a prank on Safari users is causing the Mac edition of the browser to crash, and iPhones and iPads to reboot, reports said on Monday.

Aptly named [crashsafari.com](http://crashsafari.com), the site deliberately overwhelms the browser with a self-generating text string in the address bar, according to The Guardian. This can not only force iOS devices to reboot, but lead them to heat up beforehand as their processors struggle to keep up.

Using Google's Chrome browser to visit the site will reportedly avoid crashes or reboots, whether on Android, Mac, or Windows, but still result in serious slowdowns, as well as overheating on Android devices.

The problem is being exacerbated by the use of link shortening services, which can disguise the link.

The site so far appears to be a gag instead of malicious. Other forms of crash-generating code can sometimes be used by hackers as a way of hijacking a device.

Apple devices recovering from a crash or reboot will reportedly function as normal.

Update: According to a follow-up report from iMore, Apple is aware of the crash issue and is looking into a fix.

#### How To Protect Yourself From Phishing

Last fall, Facebook users began receiving an alarming email warning. "For security reasons, your account will be disabled

permanently," said the email. To confirm your identity, the message which was signed by the "Facebook Team" instructed users to click on a link and log into what looked like a real Facebook page.

But this email had nothing to do with Facebook. It was a phishing (pronounced fishing) scam, a form of identity theft in which hackers use fraudulent websites and fake emails to attempt to steal your personal data, especially passwords and credit card information. Phishing scammers send emails that appear to come from trustworthy sources such as a social media website or a financial service provider, and tell you that they need you to follow certain links in order to rectify some problem. Then they steal your data as you enter it, lock you out, and begin using your account to send more scam messages in your name.

Phishing attacks are happening everywhere. Online security firm Kaspersky Labs says it repelled nearly 800 billion attacks in 2015, almost 2 million of which were attempts to steal money from online bank accounts.

According to Fraudwatch International, a global online fraud protection service, some of the recent phished sites included Bank of America, PayPal, Chase Bank and Apple Store. Typical fake email alerts: Westpac Bank Your Account Has Been Blocked, or Apple Store About your last Transaction.

With tax season starting to ramp up, scammers have been targeting TurboTax users with fake subject lines such as TurboTax Update: Resolve Account Issue Now and TurboTax Important Notice that urges users to open a fraudulent attachment.

Internet Service Providers (ISPs) are also now among scammers favorite phishing targets, surpassing the banking and financial services sectors during the first three quarters of 2015, reports the non-profit Anti-Phishing Working Group (APWG). Phishers like to break into ISP accounts so that they can send spam from those user accounts. ISP accounts can also contain other things that phishers want: personal identity information, credit card details, and access to domain name and hosting management. The Best Defense

How can you protect yourself against phishing lures? Here's some advice:

If you aren't 100 percent certain of the sender's authenticity, don't click on attachments or embedded links; both are likely to result in malware being installed. Instead, open a new browser window and type the URL directly into the address bar. Often a phishing website will look identical to the original, so check the address bar to confirm the address.

Similarly, never submit confidential information via forms embedded in or attached to email messages. Senders are often able to track all of the information you enter.

Be wary of emails asking for financial information. Emails reminding you to update your account, requesting you to send a wire transfer, or alerting you about a failed transaction are

compelling. However, scammers count on the urgency of the message to blind you to the potential for fraud.

Don't fall for scare tactics. Phishers often try to pressure you into providing sensitive information by threatening to disable an account or delay services until you update certain information. Contact the merchant directly to confirm the authenticity of the request.

Be suspicious of social media invitations from people you don't know. According to Kaspersky Lab research, over one in five phishing scams target Facebook. Phishers rely on your natural curiosity to click on the person's profile just to find out who it is. However, in a phishing email, every link can trigger malware, including links that appear to be images or even legal boilerplate; scammers use your hijacked account to send spam to your friends, because spam from real accounts is more believable than spam from a fake account.

Watch out for generic-looking requests for information. Many phishing emails begin with Dear Sir/Madam. Some come from a bank with which you don't even have an account.

Ignore emails with typos and misspellings. Recent real examples targeting TurboTax include Your Change Request is Completeed and User Peofile Updates!!!

Update and maintain effective software to combat phishing. Reliable anti-virus software should also automatically detect and block fake websites, as well as authenticating the major legitimate banking and shopping sites.

Mobile device users should be especially vigilant. Scammers increasingly design mobile-friendly pages; what's worse, many browsers hide the web address bars, so it can be even more difficult to spot scams on a mobile device.

#### Computer Expert Gets No Jail Time in Extensive Spamming Case

A computer expert was sentenced Thursday to two years' probation for helping send millions of spam messages that allowed computer marketers to illegally harvest email addresses and phone numbers.

Naveed Ahmed, 27, of Tampa, faced at least two years in prison under advisory sentencing guidelines, but Senior U.S. District Judge Maurice Cohill Jr. in Pittsburgh imposed probation. Defense attorney Melvin Vatz called Ahmed "a man of considerable intelligence who has unfortunately succumbed to directing those talents in the wrong way."

Ahmed cooperated with investigators "the moment he got the knock on the door" from federal agents, Vatz said.

Ahmed was a systems administrator and master's degree student at the University of South Florida. He lost his job but gained a wife since pleading guilty in August.

Cohill's sentence will allow Ahmed to work with computers that will be monitored by federal probation officers.

Ahmed was one of 12 people charged federally for marketing their illegal computer skills on Darkcode.com, a cybercriminal marketplace disabled by the FBI in July. Seventy people in the U.S. and 19 other countries were targeted in that takedown.

From September 2011 to February 2013, Ahmed and two others earned between \$2,000 to \$3,000 weekly by conspiring to violate a 2003 law designed to protect cellphone and computer users from unwanted marketing and pornography spam emails and text messages.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Jimmy Kitchen argued the sentence should be stiff enough to deter "an entire world full of potential computer hackers." But he didn't object to the probation sentence, which was similar to one given last week to a co-conspirator, Dewayne Watts, of Hernando, Florida. Watts must spend the first six months of his probation confined to his home.

A third person who pleaded guilty in the spam scheme, Phillip Fleitz, 31, of Indianapolis, is scheduled for sentencing Monday.

Fleitz has acknowledged operating the computer servers in China that the trio used. Ahmed, whom Kitchen called the "most technically adept" of the three, wrote a program that helped match cellphone numbers with their carriers. That enabled the scammers to bombard the phones with unsolicited messages. Watts wrote the text messages meant to entice phone users to respond.

Both types of spam included Internet links. Those who received the text messages were told they had won Best Buy gift cards that could be accessed by clicking the links.

In reality, computer and phone users who responded were routed to Web pages controlled by Internet Cost Per Action networks, which are companies that gather email addresses and other personal information. Such companies are legal, but the means Ahmed and the others used to drive traffic to the companies' websites was not, Kitchen said.

The networks paid Ahmed and the others for each email address they gathered. That money was sent through a Swiss bank account controlled by an unindicted and so far unidentified co-conspirator, who kept 10 percent for laundering the money, Kitchen said.

"I know my actions were irresponsible," Ahmed told the judge. "I had this naive, immature view of being invincible."

## Facebook vs. ISIS: Inside The Tech Giant's Antiterror Strategy

Facebook, under pressure to crack down on Islamic State militants using its network, has quietly ramped up its efforts to block terrorist messages and videos in what some experts say is a potentially significant move by the Silicon Valley giant in the U.S. government's battle against the terror group's propaganda

and recruitment efforts.

In an rare interview with Yahoo News, Monica Bickert, a former federal prosecutor who serves as Facebook's top content cop, provided the company's most detailed accounting yet of its efforts to identify and remove terrorist material from its site.

As described by Bickert, Facebook has set up what amounts to its own counterterrorism squad, with at least five offices around the world and scores of specialists fluent in several dozen languages. The group, part of Facebook's Community Operations team, responds around the clock to reports by Facebook users and others of terrorists using the social media network, taking terror-related material down and then looking for related accounts that the same actors might be using.

If we become aware of an account that is supporting terrorism, we'll remove that account, said Bickert, chief of global policy management, in an interview at Facebook's sprawling campus in Menlo Park, Calif. But we want to make sure that we get it all. So we will look at associated accounts pages this person liked or groups that he may have belonged to and make sure that we are moving all associated violating content.

Facebook which now has 1.5 billion users, 70 percent of them outside the United States and Canada is not only looking for messages or posts from avowed members of the Islamic State or other terror groups, Bickert says. It has instituted community standards policies controversial in some circles that go beyond those of other social media firms, banning expressions of support for terrorist groups and expressions praising their leaders or condoning violent terrorist acts.

If there is a terror attack that happens in the world, and somebody shares even a news report of that and says, I think this is wonderful, or they're mocking the victims or celebrating what has happened, that violates our policies and we'll remove it, said Bickert.

Her comments come at a time when Facebook and other social media firms have been feeling increasing heat from U.S. and other Western counterterrorism officials, members of Congress and even presidential candidates like Hillary Clinton, who have called on the companies to be more aggressive in shutting down ISIS propaganda and reporting it to the government.

The companies, wary about being perceived as too cozy with the U.S. intelligence community and of compromising the privacy of their users, have resisted some of these proposals, arguing that they could require them to engage in censorship. One provision, sponsored by Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman Richard Burr, R-N.C., and Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., would require social media firms to report to U.S. law enforcement all terrorist activity on their networks.

The provision was inserted into a Senate intelligence bill last summer and then removed after intense lobbying by a host of trade associations representing Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and other social media and tech companies, including Yahoo, congressional staff members told Yahoo News.



The provision would impose a new government mandate requiring a broad spectrum of companies to report users activities and communications to the U.S. Government and risks chilling free speech, the trade groups, including Reform Government Surveillance, a coalition of social media firms that includes Facebook, wrote in a Dec. 11 letter obtained by Yahoo News.

The proposal, and similar calls for the social media firms to engage in greater cooperation with the government, have also alarmed civil liberties advocates. After President Obama's top national security team including FBI Director James Comey and Director of National Intelligence James Clapper flew out to Silicon Valley this month for a meeting with executives of tech and social media firms, including Facebook's Sheryl Sandberg, ACLU lawyer Hugh Handeyside wrote a blistering critique of what he viewed as the potential dangers on the widely read Just Security blog.

The notion that social media companies can or should scrub their platforms of all potentially terrorist-related content not only is unrealistic, he wrote, but could also sweep in protected speech and turn the social media companies into a wing of the national security state.

As the debate over the Burr-Feinstein proposal continued, Facebook executives began closed-door briefings in Washington last month to preempt such moves by detailing the company's own internal efforts to identify and remove terror-related content without drawing too much public attention to them and riling the civil-liberties critics.

In a private off the record dinner attended by former senior intelligence community officials many with continuing close ties to their former agencies Alex Stamos, the company's chief security officer (and a former head of security at Yahoo), gave a 20-minute presentation laying out sophisticated methods, including the use of algorithms, that Facebook was using to identify terrorist content, according to a source familiar with the briefing.

At the same time, the company is helping to fund a Department of Homeland Security initiative, called Peer 2 Peer, to create a competition among college students for videos and other messaging that combats jihadi propaganda more effectively, officials hope, than the State Department's own failed attempts.

These efforts have won Facebook goodwill among some Obama administration officials and outside groups that have been tracking terrorists use of social media. They're setting the tone for what other companies can do, said Steven Stalinsky, executive director of the Middle East Media Research Institute, a private organization that closely tracks jihadi propaganda on the Internet.

Stalinsky said that Twitter (which has been far less public about its own internal policing) hosts a significantly larger portion of jihadi propaganda, especially because users quickly reappear under new handles once their accounts get taken down. Another new favored platform for the jihadis: Telegram, created

by Pavel Durov (dubbed the Russian Mark Zuckerberg ), a Berlin-based social media site that openly advertises opportunities for groups and supergroups of users to have encrypted conversations.

But Facebook has still faced more than its share of stinging criticism, especially overseas. In 2013, after British soldier Lee Rigby was brutally hacked to death near his military barracks outside London, British officials discovered that one of his two attackers, Michael Adebowale, had made graphic threats to kill military personnel in a Facebook chat six months earlier with somebody known as Foxtrot, a suspected al-Qaida operative in Yemen. A parliamentary security committee later harshly criticized Facebook for not proactively sharing that information, saying there was a significant possibility that MI5, the British domestic intelligence agency, could have prevented Rigby's murder had it been informed about the Facebook threats.

The incident appears to have been a turning point for Facebook, one U.S. law enforcement official said. In a response to the report last year, British Prime Minister David Cameron, without identifying Facebook by name, said the company in question had begun discussions with the British government about how it could rapidly improve the identification of imminent threats and reporting them to law enforcement.

But in their interviews with Yahoo News, Bickert and other Facebook officials were vague about how they define imminent threats—a threshold that, under Facebook's own policies, triggers voluntary reports by the company to law enforcement. Bickert was asked: If a Facebook user is discovered writing that he intends to travel to Syria to wage jihad, does that meet Facebook's standard for alerting the FBI? Those decisions, she said tersely, are made by the company's legal team on a case-by-case basis.

The issue of exactly how vigilant Facebook is in monitoring its network arose again after the Dec. 2, 2015, rampage in San Bernardino, Calif., that killed 14 people. Just minutes after the attack, one of the perpetrators, Tashfeen Malik, posted a message on a Facebook account pledging allegiance to Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

Alerted by the FBI, Facebook promptly took down the message that day, before the news media or others were able to find it. But Facebook appears to have missed another disturbing message just weeks earlier—posted by Enrique Marquez, who has been charged with buying two of the weapons Malik and her husband, Syed Farook, used in the attack. No one really knows me. I lead multiple lives involved in terrorist plots, Marquez wrote in a Nov. 5 chat on Facebook, according to an FBI criminal complaint against him.

Could Facebook do more to find such messages, using the same automated image technology it is already using to identify and report child pornography? Bickert, who previously specialized in child pornography cases while serving as an assistant U.S. attorney in Chicago, said there is a critical difference.

When you're talking about child exploitation offenses, and

child pornography specifically, the image itself is the criminal contraband, she said. There is no context that is necessary. When you're talking about content that supports terrorism, context is everything.

## Microsoft's New Web Browser Reportedly Tracks the Websites You Visit Even When You Ask It Not To

Microsoft's Edge browser, which is the replacement for Internet Explorer, reportedly stores the websites you visit in private browsing mode, according to the findings of a security researcher.

Ashish Singh, writing in Forensic Focus, exposed the flaw in Edge that stores website history in the hard drive of the computer, even in private browsing mode, which can then be recovered to build a history of which sites were visited.

A Microsoft spokesperson told Business Insider that the company had recently become aware of a report that claims InPrivate tabs are not working as designed and we are committed to resolving this as quickly as possible.

The flaw is damaging for Edge, which has had a rocky start after shipping without extensions such as Adblock or Hola, the VPN service or other standard features in Chrome or Safari. Microsoft has said that extensions are coming in summer 2016.

According to The Verge, other browsers, including Chrome, Safari, and Firefox, have also had this issue, showing that private browsing mode is not meant to deflect an investigation of the hard drive.

Edge is currently used by around 3% of the total desktop browser market, according to Netmarketshare. Internet Explorer, which Edge replaces, has a combined share of 45%. Windows 10 comes with Edge installed as the default browser.

## Facebook's Friend Finder Found Unlawful by Germany's Highest Court

In its younger days, a fear spread through Facelandia: friend requests were popping up, from people who Facebook said had suggested friendships but who protested that in actuality, they'd done nothing of the kind.

Many wondered, was it a computer virus?

No, it was just Facebook trying to be helpful by automatically scanning an assortment of data crunchables: mutual friends, work and education data, and contacts imported using the company's Friend Finder, be they from Outlook, Gmail, Hotmail, Yahoo, or what have you.

Helpful, and self-serving, useful as it is for growing the

network and bolstering Facebook's advertising market.

Now, Germany's highest court has said nein! to all that.

Reuters reports that a panel of the Federal Court of Justice has ruled that Facebook's Friend Finder feature, used to encourage users to market the social media network to their contacts, constituted advertising harassment in a case that was filed in 2010 by the Federation of German Consumer Organisations (VZBV).

Friends Finder asks users for permission to snort the e-mail addresses of their friends or contacts from their address books, thereby allowing the company to send invitations to non-Facebook users to join up.

Earlier decisions from two lower courts had in 2012 and 2014 deemed Friend Finder a deceptive marketing practice, saying that Facebook had violated German laws on data protection and unfair trade practices.

The federal court upheld those decisions, adding that Facebook hasn't adequately informed consumers about what it's doing with their contacts.

Reuters quoted a spokeswoman for Facebook in Germany, who sent a statement saying that the social network was at the time waiting to receive the formal decision and would study the findings to assess any impact on our services.

The VZBV is pleased.

The organization, which is an umbrella for 41 German consumer associations, doesn't know yet what's to become of Friend Finder, but it does suspect this decision will have implications for other services.

### Facebook Friends Are Almost Unanimously Fake, Suggests Evolutionary Psychology Professor

How many of your Facebook friends would you say are truly friends with you? A new Oxford University study has found that friends lists on social-media sites such as Facebook can be highly misleading. The study states that most users' friends are more likely to be unsympathetic and unreliable in real-life situations.

Robin Dunbar, a professor of evolutionary psychology at Oxford University in the UK, undertook the study in order to determine the correlation between people's relationships with Facebook friends and real friends. According to Dunbar, people tend to have about four intimate friends at the most. He classified that people could have 15 best friends, 50 good friends, 150 friends, 500 acquaintances and 1,500 people that can be recognised on the social-media platform Facebook.

The study analyzed the different boundaries set in virtual relationships that overlap real-life friendships in order to determine how many of users' social-media friends can truly be

relied upon in reality. The study also outlined a limit of 150 friends, which he called the Dunbar Number, which claims that it is impossible for people to have more than 150 friends.

The results of the study, which had a total of 3,375 male and female participants between the ages of 18 to 65, revealed that an average of 27.6% of real friends were reported by the participants when asked to reveal how many 'genuine friends they had. However, when asked how many friends would be available to provide support in a crisis, participants numbers dropped drastically to four.

Professor Dunbar said, Respondents who had unusually large networks did not increase the numbers of close friendships they had but, rather, added more loosely defined acquaintances into their friendship circle simply because most social-media sites do not allow one to differentiate between these layers.

The study suggests that in order to maintain valuable relationships, face-to-face interaction seems to be vital. Dunbar says that despite technological advancements in digital communication, there lies a cognitive constraint on the size of social networks that cannot be overcome by online communication. In other words, go old school and maintain relationships with face-to-face communication if you want your friends to stick by you through thick and thin.

## You'll Soon Be Able To Do More Than Just Like A Facebook Post

You see a friend's Facebook post about the death of a pet, the loss of a job or an annoying encounter they had at work. You want to acknowledge the post but you don't want to click the Like button. Those aren't likeable posts.

Maybe you'd prefer to click on a Sad button or a Love button or a Wow button. In a few weeks, you'll have that option.

In an interview with Bloomberg, Facebook's Chief Product Officer Chris Cox, said the company is adding five new reactions to the popular Like button. Although he wouldn't give a specific date for the change, he did say it would be "in the next few weeks."

And no, there won't be a dislike button.

Instead, when users hold down the Like button, they'll get other options -- angry, sad, wow, haha and love.

The reactions will pop up as yellow animated emojis that are designed to bounce and change expressions to make their meaning clear. And according to the Bloomberg report, posts will show the tallies of the different post responses.

The plans for new Facebook reactions come about a month and a half after Mark Zuckerberg, co-founder and CEO of Facebook, said in a town hall forum that his team was working on creating options that would go beyond the Like button.

This is going to be a big change for Facebook. The social network's Like button has become one of its most popular and well-known functions on the site. People "like" posts about a friend finishing a marathon, reading a great book, sliding in the snow or finding a new job.

Did you ever visit your parents' office? Was it like something out of Mad Men, with offices surrounding a central secretarial pool? Or a more modern cube farm? Whatever the layout or the era, it was like a glimpse into...

According to Facebook, users click on the Like button about 6 billion times a day. And it's become important to organizations and companies, which use it to gauge interest in their products, events and marketing pushes.

With more reaction options, individual users and businesses now will have more information about what their friends and followers think about what they're doing.

"These new buttons give them so much more information than the Like button," said Patrick Moorhead, an analyst with Moor Insights & Strategy. "With that, they can better target ads and offers. This could be very valuable, since better-targeted ads are better performing and more expensive."

Zeus Kerravala, an analyst with ZK Research, noted that the additional reaction options give everyone, including ad buyers, a chance to take that information in and respond to it.

"In this world of big data and analytics, more information is better," he added. "If something is making people mad, a company could post a response acknowledging it. Facebook is giving people more ways to interact."

For Ezra Gottheil, an analyst with Technology Business Research, this is a big move for Facebook because users are so comfortable with the social network's features and look. If big changes aren't made with care, users could stop commenting as often.

"You always want to make your service as effortless as possible, and Facebook is very aware of that design goal," said Gottheil. "Any good designer knows that choice is a trade off. The user gains power, but exerts more effort. Facebook was clever to hide the choices under the Like icon. This gives people the ability to provide more input without much more effort."

#### Will You Like Facebook's New Reactions?

Do you ever "like" something on Facebook? If so, life is about to get a bit more complex.

The social networking giant is about to roll out something called Reactions, which will allow you to express your feelings in a more nuanced fashion.

In the conference call with analysts after Facebook's blockbuster

financial results, Mark Zuckerberg confirmed that Reactions - which are being tested in Spain, Ireland and a few other places - would be shown everywhere "pretty soon".

The idea, the chief executive said, is to add "a little bit of complexity" to something that is very simple. "When you only have a like button, if you share a sad piece of content or something that makes you angry, people may not have the tool to react to it."

So now Facebook users are being given new tools in the form of emoticons labelled "love", "haha", "wow", "sad" and "angry" - or they can still just "like".

There was another button marked "yay" but that has been removed after pilot users apparently said: "Err .what??"

For more than a billion people who visit Facebook every day there may now be a tricky period of adjustment. Do I just like that picture of your dog or do I love it? Should I go as far as telling you I'm "angry" about your views on the issues of the day - or is "haha" enough?

But it's advertisers who will be really going "wow" about this change to the way Facebook works. The latest results show just how much they have bought into the social network's message that it offers a unique way to connect with consumers and learn everything about them. Now they will have a far more complex set of data.

Simon Calvert, head of strategy at the marketing agency Lida, says if the new system accurately reflects human emotions then it will be very interesting.

"Emotions travel five times faster than rational thought," he said. "So the ability to build better emotional connections with consumers is something that advertisers really prize."

Image copyright Facebook

Image caption My VirtualBagel Facebook page currently has close to 4,600 likes

Facebook "likes" have become a somewhat devalued currency, as I found out when my Virtual Bagel imaginary business collected more than 4,000 likes from all over the world.

"They're devalued because brands collect them mindlessly," Mr. Calvert explains. But he sees advertisers using Reactions in a far more sophisticated way to get insights into the emotions people feel about products.

Another social media marketing expert, Kristal Ireland of Twentysixdigital, says there is always great excitement when Facebook makes a change like this. She believes there is an opportunity to learn far more about what people think of marketing messages but says the real challenge will be to make sense of the flood of new data: "You might end up with such fragmented data that you can't make up your mind what your ad should look like."

But what should we as Facebook users think about laying out our

emotions for all to see?

Nick Oliver urges caution. His company People.io aims to help users take control over their social media data and realise its value to advertisers.

"From the consumer point of view they are now giving up their emotional data for advertisers to use and manipulate," he says. "People open themselves up on social media and the data is used in ways they never expect."

He argues that the rise in the use of ad blockers, which are largely ineffective on Facebook, makes this data even more valuable. "The demand for a price of people's attention is getting higher."

Of course, the big question for advertisers is just how honest people will be in expressing themselves via the Reactions buttons.

The social media era has seen millions sharing their feelings with the world - but we are quickly learning just how dangerous that can be.

Decoding the significance of Facebook love, laughter and tears will become an essential skill for anyone in the marketing industry.

#### Firefox Will Now Push Email, Social Media Notifications Directly to Your Browser

The days of hoarding tabs is over for Firefox users. A new update to the browser allows websites to send you push notifications without the website open.

Instead of keeping your email, social media and other website tabs open to stay on top of updates and notifications, developers can now send you push messages through Firefox without taking up space at the top of your browser. This way, you can still stay up-to-date on everything without your computer getting bogged down running half-a-dozen websites in the background.

The good news is you don't need to worry about getting unwanted notifications; web developers need your permission to start sending updates. Click the I Control Center icon next to your Firefox address bar to manage push notification settings.

Out-of-tab push notifications are already incorporated on Macs through Safari Push Notifications and Apple Push Notifications Service. In addition, Google Chrome had a similar push notification system in place, so this is really just Firefox catching up to competitors.

Mozilla is offering the feature through the W3C Push API the company has helped establish on the web, which is a system of sending push messages to web apps.



Not every website will have push notifications for users immediately; some will still have to work on incorporating them into its designs. Developers interested in setting up push notifications for their websites can check out the details on Firefox's FAQ page.

## France Wants A New Keyboard To Protect Its Language

The latest campaign to protect the French language isn't being waged over anglicisms like "hashtag" or "selfie," but the design of a keyboard.

This week, the French government announced a plan to standardize the French-language computer keyboard, as part of an effort to help protect and nurture the language. The ministry of culture and communication says it's "nearly impossible to correctly write French" on keyboards sold in the country today, meaning that the language's strict grammatical rules are being flouted more regularly. The ministry has partnered with a standardization group to develop a new keyboard norm, which will be presented for public feedback this summer.

Unlike the QWERTY keyboards on most devices in the US and Europe, French-language keyboards follow an AZERTY layout, and they've never been standardized. That means that the layout can vary from one manufacturer to another, making it difficult for users to locate important keys or accented characters.

The placement of the "@" and " " keys, for example, is inconsistent across French keyboards, and accenting capitalized letters can be particularly difficult, requiring commands that aren't obvious to many users or, in the case of the "'" character on PCs, impossible. That's a problem, considering that "'a" ("that") is commonly used at the beginning of sentences, and that surnames are often written in all-uppercase on government documents. It can also lead to confusion; an example cited by the ministry compares "INTERNE" (a medical intern) to "INTERNÉ" (a mental health patient).

"We can only deplore the fact that the use of accents on capitalized letters is variable," the Académie Française, the official guardian of the French language, says on its website, in a statement cited in the ministry report. "[I]t should be noted that in French, the accent has full orthographic value," it added, emphasizing its importance.

The Académie Française has spent the better part of 300 years protecting the integrity of the French language more recently, by defending it from anglicisms like "cloud computing" and "le cheeseburger." (The notoriously stodgy institution calls its 40 panel members "Immortals," and set an upper age limit of 75 in 2010.) And although the number of French speakers is rising across the globe, there are concerns over the future of the language within France. Recent surveys have shown an increase in spelling errors among French students, and there has been some debate over whether text messages and other forms of online

communication bear some of the blame.

Once adopted, the new keyboard standard would be voluntary for keyboard manufacturers, though in a report outlining its position, the culture and communication ministry said that it could be required for public administration computers, which would incentivize companies to follow suit. AFNOR, the standardization group charged with developing the new keyboard, has said that the process is open to all who want to participate.

Some have already taken matters into their own hands. In recent years, a community of advocates for open-source software developed BÉPO, a keyboard layout that was cited as an example in the ministry report. BÉPO is based on the Dvorak layout, which was developed in the 1930s as a more ergonomic alternative to QWERTY, and is designed specifically for the French language. Some accented characters have their own key, and ligatures like œ and can be executed with a simple shortcut. Its developers say the layout was based on a statistical study of the French language, with the most commonly used letters placed on the "home row," where a user's fingers would naturally rest.

"The fact that the government is talking about BÉPO is a very good sign," says Frøddøric Urbain, a BÉPO user and member of Framasoft, a French organization that promotes the use of open-source software. Urbain, 48, began using BÉPO about a year ago, and although it's taken some time to get used to, he says it's far more intuitive than the AZERTY keyboards he's forced to use at his finance job. "I don't find it practical at all," he says of his AZERTY keyboard. "Everyone like me will welcome this initiative from the government, which has finally recognized that the French language, with all of its specificity, is not adapted to an international keyboard like AZERTY."

But the government's ambitions go beyond the French language. In its statement, the ministry said the layout should allow for regional languages including Breton, Occitan, Catalan, and those used in Polynesia, each requiring accented characters that don't appear in French. It should also allow users to "more easily enter" Latin characters used in other European languages.

"We want something that's usable, something that's economically feasible."

"It seems essential that this keyboard allows for the easy use of not only French, but also different languages present in our land, because these languages have specifics that should be taken into account," the ministry said. "Indeed, in a highly multilingual context, it is now necessary to use several languages on the same document or project."

It's not clear whether the government will adopt a standard that, like BÉPO, drastically diverges from AZERTY. In a press release this week, AFNOR said the new standard would not "disrupt" the current layout, though Philippe Magnabosco, the project manager charged with overseeing the development, says the organization is "not going to close the door for innovation." He says the group will consult with keyboard makers, programmers, and users

on the proposal to be presented this summer, and that it will be open to proposals that either modify the existing layout with added keys, or more alternative designs that meet minimum requirements.

"We're not working in an ideal world here we're making standards for them to be applied in the real world," Magnabosco says. "So we're not going to look at something that would revolutionize the keyboard completely. We want something that's usable, something that's economically feasible. We want it to work."

## World's Oldest Torrent Is Still Being Shared After 4,419 Days

A fan-created ASCII version of the 1999 sci-fi classic The Matrix is the oldest known torrent that's still active. Created more than 12 years ago, the file has outlived many blockbuster movies and is still downloaded a few times a week, even though the site from where it originated has disappeared.

BitTorrent is an excellent distribution mechanism, but for a file to live on at least one person has to keep sharing it.

This means that most torrents eventually die after the public loses interest. However, some torrents seem to live on forever.

More than ten years ago TorrentFreak reported on a fan-made ASCII version of The Matrix, describing it as a really old torrent. This torrent had survived for 696 days, which was a rarity.

At the time BitTorrent had only a fraction of the users it has now so it was harder to keep them active. A lot of things have changed in the decade since, but the torrent in question is still going strong.

The torrent file of The Matrix ASCII was created more than 12 years ago (4,419 days) on December 20, 2003. Even though the original site is no longer online, it still has 8 active seeders at the time of writing.

There are also people actively downloading the file, most likely after they found a copy of the release on one of the torrent sites where it remains available. To the best of our knowledge, this means that The Matrix ASCII is the oldest torrent that's still being actively shared.

The 12-year-old release of The Matrix ASCII comes with a DVD cover and insert. While there are no accurate statistics available it is believed to have been downloaded by tens of thousands of people over its lifetime.

Perhaps worried that Hollywood wouldn't appreciate the effort, the torrent includes a small disclaimer.

This work is a parody. As such I do not believe that this DVD has any possibility of competing with the original in any market. It is not for sale, the disclaimer reads.

Prospective downloaders have very little to worry about though. Warner Bros. is not known to go after this type of fan-art that's created for non-commercial use and the creator has never been targeted either.

The people who've downloaded a copy of The Matrix have thus far responded mostly positively after watching the ASCII movie. That is, those who knew what to expect. Those looking for the original Matrix movie are less appreciative.

Dude, tell me what to do with this Matrix ASCII, cause the picture is all green n stuff, can't even see what's going on. And, it's in 4 VOB files, but why? was the response of one unhappy downloader.

The fact that this torrent has been able to survive for so long is a testament to the resilience of BitTorrent. For us, The Matrix ASCII has become an iconic release and we'll certainly keep an eye on how it fares in the future.

Update: Jack, who created the torrent, restored the Matrix ASCII website on a new address:  
<http://takeovertheworld.org/matrix/>

=~::~~::~=

Atari Online News, Etc. is a weekly publication covering the entire Atari community. Reprint permission is granted, unless otherwise noted at the beginning of any article, to Atari user groups and not for profit publications only under the following terms: articles must remain unedited and include the issue number and author at the top of each article reprinted. Other reprints granted upon approval of request. Send requests to: [dpj@atarinews.org](mailto:dpj@atarinews.org)

No issue of Atari Online News, Etc. may be included on any commercial media, nor uploaded or transmitted to any commercial online service or internet site, in whole or in part, by any agent or means, without the expressed consent or permission from the Publisher or Editor of Atari Online News, Etc.

Opinions presented herein are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the staff, or of the publishers. All material herein is believed to be accurate at the time of publishing.